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For School Administrators: Preventing Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) does not recommend school closures due to MRSA infections. Provided the following recommendations are observed, there is minimal to no health risk to other students, faculty, and staff.

- Promote good hygiene. Ensure access to sinks, soaps, and clean towels for the cleaning of hands. If soap and water are not available, ensure the availability of 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- School attendance. Students and staff with a MRSA infection can attend school regularly as long as the wound is covered with a clean, dry dressing and they are receiving proper treatment. They do not need to be isolated or sent home in the middle of the day if a suspected “staph” or MRSA infection is noticed. They should wash the area with soap and water and cover it lightly. They should also be encouraged to have the wound looked at by their healthcare provider. Those who touch the wound should wash their hands immediately.
- Follow routine procedures for cleaning the environment. In general, use a freshly prepared solution of commercially available products to clean and disinfect, such as a detergent (cleanser), chemical germicide (disinfectant), or disinfectant-detergent. A list of EPA approved disinfectants can be found at http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_h_mrsa_vre.pdf.

The ADHS website contains additional information on MRSA (http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oids/epi/disease/mrsa/mrsa_g.htm). The ADHS webpage also includes a link to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) new web page about MRSA in schools, <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>. The CDC webpage covers the topic in greater depth and includes many useful links to educational materials and school toolkits.

Please contact your local health department if you need additional information.